



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **HEAVY RAINS SET BACK COUNTY PARK REBUILDING AND REOPENING Volunteers Help Restore Mt. Gower Open Space Preserve**

Recent rains have delayed the opening of two fire-damaged county parks, but the parks are scheduled to reopen this month, thanks to the work of various volunteers.

The October 2003 Cedar fire devastated Mt. Gower and Simon Open Space Preserves, and they were scheduled to reopen in mid-November after hundreds of hours were spent clearing debris, restoring trails and rebuilding the preserves.

However, because of last month's heavy rains and extensive erosion, the reopening date has been rescheduled for Dec. 16.

County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation Director Renée Bahl, said volunteers will gather Dec. 11 at Mt. Gower to finish work to allow the park to reopen this month.

"Staff, National Emergency Grant crews, the California Conservation Corps and volunteers are working hard to continue to rebuild Mt. Gower and Simon," Bahl said.

The Ramona Trails Association (RTA), a local trails group, has been at the forefront of the volunteer effort to help combat the set back from rain damage at Mt. Gower.

"Because of the selfless efforts of volunteer groups such as RTA, the reopening does not need to be delayed any further," Bahl said. "Come mid-December, residents and visitors will once again be able to enjoy Mt. Gower."

It is estimated that the recent heavy rains caused an additional \$1 million in damages to fire-impacted County parks and open space preserves.

Volunteers interested in helping restore Mt. Gower can participate on Saturday, December 11, 2004 from 8 a.m. to noon, by meeting at the staging area at the end of Gunn Road in Ramona. For more information, contact Amy Harbert at 858-694-3044.

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